

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US PRESS ON GUERRILLAS IN ANGOLA

THE FOLLOWING STORY APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF
THE JANUARY 8 EDITION OF THE WASHINGTON POST. QUOTE:

GUERRILLAS GROWING THREAT IN ANGOLA, BY BRUCE MCCOLM
AND DAVID SMITH.

GUERRILLA GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE
LIBERATION OF ANGOLA, WHICH WON THAT COUNTRY'S CIVIL WAR,
ARE STILL CREATING CHAOS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THAT MAY
PRESAGE A NEW ROUND OF WARFARE.

THE PRO-WESTERN INSURGENTS HAVE CUT COFFEE PRODUCTION BY
80 PERCENT, CAUSED SLOWDOWNS AND STRIKES IN THE CITIES AND
SABOTAGED INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, HALTED THE BENGUELA
RAILROAD AND CONFINED THE CUBAN TROOPS IN CABINDA, ANGOLA'S
OIL ENCLAVE, TO THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AND THE OIL
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INSTALLATIONS.

THOSE GROUPS RECENTLY MET QUIETLY IN KINSHASA, CAPITAL OF
NEIGHBORING ZAIRE, TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS AGAINST
THE POPULAR MOVEMENT'S GOVERNMENT.

THE MID-DECEMBER MEETING DID NOT RESULT IN A COMMON
FRONT, ALTHOUGH HOLDEN ROBERTO -- HEAD OF THE NATIONAL
FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA, A RIVAL OF AGOSTINHO
NETO'S POPULAR MOVEMENT -- OFTEN SEEMS TO BE TRYING

TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE SPEAKS FOR OTHER GROUPS
AS WELL AS HIS OWN.

THE FACT THAT THE MEETING WAS HELD IN KINSHASA ALSO
INEVITABLY RAISED SPECULATION THAT ZAIRE'S PRESIDENT
MOBUTU SESE SEKO, WHO APPARENTLY HAD WASHED HIS HANDS
OF ANGOLAN AFFAIRS, MIGHT BE RENEWING HIS INTEREST
IN INTERVENING IN THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY.

JONAS SAVIMBI, HEAD OF UNITA (THE NATIONAL UNION
FOR THE TOTAL INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA), THE POPULAR
MOVEMENT'S OTHER PRINCIPAL CIVIL WAR RIVAL, IS KNOWN
TO HAVE FELT THAT MOBUTU WAS TRYING TO PROMOTE ROBERTO
TO A CENTRAL POSITION IN THE ANGOLAN OPPOSITION.

SAVIMBI'S CAUTION ABOUT FORGING NEW ALLIANCES OR REACTIVA-
TING OLD ONES WAS REPORTEDLY THE MAIN REASON THAT NO
FORMAL COMMON FRONT WAS REACHED. ACCORDING TO EUROPEAN
DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, SAVIMBI REFUSED ROBERTO'S PROPOSAL
THAT THEY ANNOUNCE THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT IN
EXILE AND THE OPENING OF A UNITED FRONT IN NORTHERN
ANGOLA.

NONETHELESS, DESPITE THE VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS'
DIFFERENCES IN AIMS, METHODS AND SUPPLIES AND
EFFECTIVENESS, THEY HAVE REORGANIZED IN THE PAST FEW
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MONTHS, AND NOW POSE A MILITARY AND POLITICAL THREAT
TO THEIR COMMON ENEMY, THE POPULAR MOVEMENT.

FOR INSTANCE, THE RESISTANCE GROUPS IN CABINDA HAVE TIED
UP A FIFTH OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CUBAN ALLIES, WHO ARE
ENGAGED, IRONICALLY, IN PROTECTING THE INSTALLATIONS
OF CABINDA GULF, A SUBSIDIARY OF THE GULF OIL CORP.
OF PITTSBURGH.

NONE OF THE OPPOSITION GROUBS APPEARS TO BE GETTING
ANY SUBSTANTIAL DIRECT BACKING FROM OUTSIDE GOVERNMENTS,
BUT ALL SEEM TO RECEIVE SOME AMOUNT OF SUCH NON-MILITARY
SUPPORT AS FOOD AND CLOTHING FROM GOVERNMENTS AND
HUMANITARIAN GROUPS. THEY USE THIS AID TO SUSTAIN
SUPPORTERS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

THE GUERRILLAS ARE BEING AIDED BY VILLAGERS WHO REFUSE
TO COOPERATE WITH THE NETO GOVERNMENT, DIPLOMATIC SOURCES
SAY, AND DRAW ON CAPTURED WEAPONS AND HIDDEN CACHES
OF ARMS RECEIVED DURING THE CIVIL WAR.
PERHAPS MOST SURPRISING OF THE GUERRILLAS' SUCCESSES
HAS BEEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HOLDEN ROBERTO'S NATIONAL
FRONT IN THE NORTH. ONE EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT SAID, "THEY'RE
FIGHTING LIKE SOLDIERS NOW THAT THEY KNOW U.S. JETS

AREN'T GOING TO COME POURING IN TO AID THEM."

NATIONAL FRONT GUERRILLAS HAVE CONCENTRATED LARGELY HIT AND RUN ATTACKS ON MILITARY CONVOYS AND SMALL OUTPOSTS OF CUBAN AND GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS.

ON A FUND-RAISING TRIP TO EUROPE TOWARD THE END OF LAST YEAR, ROBERTO TOLD US THAT HIS FRONT HAS "10,000 WELL-ARMED SOLDIERS AND 7,000 INSUFFICIENTLY EQUIPPED AUXILIARY FORCES" IN ANGOLA. OTHER OBSERVERS PUT THE FIGURE MUCH LOWER.

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SINCE NO INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED INTO NORTHERN ANGOLA FOR NEARLY A YEAR, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ARRIVE AT RELIABLE ESTIMATES, BUT MOST DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY SOURCES CALCULATE THE NATIONAL FRONT'S MILITARY STRENGTH AT ABOUT 3,000--ALTHOUGH THEY ADD THAT THOSE SOLDIERS ARE MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THEY WERE A YEAR AGO, WHEN THEY RELIED HEAVILY ON THE PORTUGUESE, BRITISH AND AMERICAN MERCENARIES WHO HAVE NOW LEFT.

THE FRONT'S APPARENT SUCCESS IN NORTHERN ANGOLA IS ESPECIALLY SURPRISING SINCE IT LACKS ANY PARTY STRUCTURE AND ITS PRINCIPAL LEADERS ARE OUT OF THE COUNTRY: HOLDEN ROBERTO HIMSELF LIVES IN KINSHASA, ZAIRE, WHERE BY ALL ACCOUNTS HE IS BROKE; THE FRONT'S FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL RUNS A TAXI CONCESSION IN KINSHASA; AND DANIEL CHIPENDA, WHO LEFT THE POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR THE NATIONAL FRONT, IS REPORTED BY BRITISH AND FRONT SOURCES TO BE LIVING COMFORTABLY ON MONEY SEIZED FROM ANGOLAN BANKS.

THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP ON THE GROUND IS SEEN AS ONE POSSIBLE MOTIVE FOR ROBERTO'S RECENT ATTEMPT TO CONTACT UNITA'S SAVIMBI, WHO REMAINS INSIDE ANGOLA WITH HIS GUERRILLAS AS HE HAS FOR THE PAST EIGHT YEARS.

IN FACT, UNITA CLAIMS TO HAVE ITS TOTAL LEADERSHIP INSIDE THE COUNTRY. THIS AND ITS INCREASED APPEAL AMONG URBAN ANGOLANS MAKE IT THE BEST ORGANIZED OF ANY REBEL FORCE OR PARTY, AND ADDS CREDENCE TO ITS CLAIMS OF ESCALATED ECONOMIC SABOTAGE.

SINCE 1968, UNITA'S MAIN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC TARGET HAS BEEN THE BENGUELA RAILROAD, WHICH IS A VITAL LINK TO THE ATLANTIC FOR ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE. ACCORDING TO AN OFFICIAL U.S. SOURCE, MOST OF THE LINE IS CLOSED FOR

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FEAR OF SABOTAGE.

UNITA'S NEW TACTIC HAS BEEN SABOTAGE IN URBAN AREAS, WHERE IT HAD LONG BEEN CONSIDERED WEAK. DIPLOMATIC SOURCES SAY IT HAS CAUSED SLOWDOWNS AND STRIKES IN LOBITO, MOCAMEDES AND LUANDA, THE CAPITAL.

UNITA FORCES ALSO CLAIM TO HAVE MINED THE SOUTH AFRICAN-RUN HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT ON THE CUNENE RIVER INSIDE ANGOLA, THE JOINT CUBAN-SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER OUTPOST AT CUANGAR AND THE ROAD BETWEEN SA DA BANDERIA AND SERPO PINTO, IN THE SOUTH, AS WELL AS THE MAIN ARTERY BETWEEN LUANDA AND HUAMBO.

EUROPEAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES CONFIRM UNITA'S CLAIM THAT THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED AT LEAST FIVE MAJOR OFFENSIVES AGAINST UNITA IN THE LAST HALF OF 1976.

IN A LETTER SMUGGLED OUT OF ANGOLA FOLLOWING ONE OF THESE OFFENSIVES, SAVIMBI SAID THAT TWO OF HIS TOP COMMANDERS COL. GAIO CACOMA AND LTC JOSE ALVES KAZOMBUELA, HAD BEEN KILLED AND THAT GOVERNMENT FORCES HAD USED NAPALM AGAINST CROPS AND VILLAGES.

THE LARGEST OF THESE OFFENSIVES, TOWARD THE END OF THE YEAR, INVOLVED NEARLY 20,000 CUBAN AND GOVERNMENT TROOPS, MILITARY SOURCES SAY. REFUGEES FROM THE SOUTHERN PART OF ANGOLA SAY THAT VILLAGES THOUGHT TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO UNITA WERE DESTROYED OR FORCIBLY RELOCATED, AND THAT CROPS AND CATTLE WERE DESTROYED.

LAST FALL, ROBERTO TOLD US IN AN INTERVIEW IN PARIS, "NO COFFEE WILL BE PRODUCED UNTIL THE CUBANS AND THE RUSSIANS LEAVE," AND WE HEARD REPORTS OVER ANGOLA'S GOVERNMENT-RUN RADIO OF WIDESPREAD BURNING OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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COFFEE CROPS.

UNITA'S SAVIMBI CLAIMED IN SEPTEMBER THAT A THOUSAND CUBAN FAMILIES HAD TAKEN OVER ANGOLAN COFFEE ESTATES, AND REFUGEES IN ZAIRE CLAIM THAT THAT MANY PICKERS HAVE DESERTED THE COFFEE PLANTATIONS.

WHAT MAY BE MORE WORRYING TO THE GOVERNMENT IN LUANDA THAN THE CONTINUING GUERRILLA WARFARE OF ITS OLD CIVIL WAR ENEMIES, HOWEVER, IS INCREASING ACTIVITY BY TWO SEPARATIST GROUPS IN THE ENCLAVE OF CABINDA.

DIPLOMATS SAY THAT THE TWO GROUPS -- THE TRADITIONAL FLEC (FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE ENCLAVE OF CABINDA) AND THE SMALLER, RECENTLY FORMED MOLICA (MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF CABINDA) -- APPEAR TO MOVE FREELY THROUGH THE AREA, EXCEPT FOR THE CAPITAL AND THE INSTALLATIONS OF CABINDA GULF.

OFFICIAL US SOURCES SAY THAT SOME 3,000 OF THE APPROXIMATELY 15,000 CUBAN SOLDIERS STILL IN ANGOLA ARE STATIONED IN CABINDA TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN OIL INSTALLATIONS, WHICH PRODUCE \$500 MILLION PER YEAR IN ROYALTIES -- ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF ANGOLA'S FOREIGN REVENUES.

THE CUBANS ARE GARRISONED ONLY IN THE CITY OF CABINDA AND AROUND OIL INSTALLATIONS, U.S. OFFICIALS REPORT. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, WOUNDED CUBAN SOLDIERS ARE REGULARLY TRANSPORTED TO LUANDA ON TWO 737 FLIGHTS PER WEEK.

ALTHOUGH RECENT REPORTS FROM CABINDA INDICATE THAT FLEC AND MOLICA HAVE COORDINATED THEIR OFFENSIVE AND ARE ESCALATING THE SCOPE AND FREQUENCY OF THEIR RAIDS, GULF REPORTED THAT ITS INSTALLATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN ATTACKED RECENTLY, LEADING SOME OBSERVERS TO SPECULATE THAT THE UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPANY MAY BE BUYING OFF THE GUERRILLAS.

FLEC AND MOLICA ARE ARMED AND SUPPORTED BY ZAIRE AND GABON, DIPLOMATIC AND AFRICAN SOURCES SAY, ADDING

THAT THESE NEIGHBORING GOVERNMENTS SEE THE GUERRILLAS' GOAL OF SECESSION AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE AND ADMINISTER THE ENCLAVE AS A TAX-FREE "AFRICAN LIECHTENSTEIN" FOR MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

REPORTEDLY, THE FRENCH OIL COMPANY ELF IS ALSO FINANCING THE TWO SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS, WITH AN EYE TO SOME DAY OPERATING THE GULF OIL RIGS AND INSTALLATIONS.

HIGH-LEVEL SOURCES IN KINSHASA AND PARIS SAY THAT ELF FUNDED FRENCH MERCENARY ROBERT DENARD'S 16-MAN FORCE, WHICH FOUGHT IN CABINDA IN 1975. THE GROUP MET WITH LITTLE SUCCESS AND DISBANDED A YEAR OR SO AGO, AND DENARD IS REPORTED TO BE LIVING IN GABON NOW. IN NORTHERN ANGOLA ITSELF, A US OFFICIAL SAID, INCREASED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY ON THE ROADS HAS FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO USE AIRLIFTS TO RESUPPLY ITS TROOPS AND CUBANS NORTH OF CARMONA.

REFUGEES FROM THE AREA REPORT AIR ATTACKS AGAINST THEIR

VILLAGES, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECENTLY SHIFTED
A NUMBER OF MIGS TO THE AIRBASE AT CARMONA, WHICH
MAY PRESAGE AN ESCALATION OF ANTI-GUERRILLA ATTACKS.

(MCCOLM AND SMITH RECENTLY SPENT SIX WEEKS IN SOUTHERN
ANGOLA WITH UNITA FORCES. LATER IN WESTERN EUROPE
AND THE UNITED STATES THEY INTERVIEWED ANGOLAN AFFAIRS
EXPERTS AND REPRESENTATIVES IN EXILE OF THE GROUPS
STILL FIGHTING IN THE COUNTRY. THEY ARE FREELANCE
WRITERS WHO ORIGINALLY ENTERED ANGOLA TO MAKE NEWS
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AND DOCUMENTARY FILMS). END OF ARTICLE. UNQUOTE.
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